



22

Policy brief explains why the arts are an essential investment

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies has updated and expanded its popular policy brief, *Why Should Government Support the Arts?* This resource answers frequently asked questions about public funding for the arts and culture.

In addition to updated research on economic, educational, civic and health benefits, the brief includes new sections dispelling the myth that the arts are a partisan issue and underscoring the importance of public arts support in rural communities.

A refreshed Research Supplement contains handy links to authoritative data.

Designed for public arts leaders and advocates, the new and expanded edition describes why the arts are an essential public investment. This document invites conversation and reflection about the value of the arts to American communities. It also provides resource material and research citations that any state can use to support its case for the arts.

The brief is available at www.nasaa.org.

PUBLIC VALUE PARTNERSHIPS

The Three Rs at work

Public Value Partnerships grants between Montana nonprofit arts organizations and the Montana Arts Council champion the fact that the arts are of benefit to all the citizens of Montana and are worthy of state and federal investment.

Public Value Partnerships utilize three tools we call “The Three Rs” to expand the public value of the work being done by Montana’s non-profit arts organizations:

- Building relationships;
- Creating greater relevance and meaning; and
- Establishing return on investment (measured both as economic vitality and impact on people’s lives).

MAC believes that using “The Three Rs” strengthens participation, understanding and support from audiences, donors and funders. We’d like to share some of the best examples of these stories with you from 2013:

Building Relationships

Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, Bozeman: Because Montana MSIP’s mission is to make professional productions of Shakespeare and other classics available in communities with a focus on those that are rural and underserved, strong and personal relationships are natural byproducts of the tour. This occurs when the MSIP office staff makes direct phone calls to tour coordinators before and after the company’s visit to their town, but it is most effective when the actors build relationships with the community members before and after each performance.

The MSIP tour actors visit 60 communities over the course of the summer tour. With the exception of some of the larger communities (Missoula, Billings, etc.), community members often provide potluck lunches and dinners for the actors. The 10 actors who hail from all over the United States get to share a meal and learn about individual community members and the town itself in nearly every community.

One third of the communities that bring Shakespeare in the Parks to their town also put the actors up in local families’ homes. Oftentimes this creates relationships that become lifelong friendships.

Susan Wolfe, the tour coordinator from Forsyth, started off as a tour host for a number of actors in 2001. At that time, her son was 6 years old and fascinated by the swordfights in “Henry IV, Part II.” When the actors left town, they presented her son with one of the

swords that was no longer being used in the performance as a thank-you gift.

Now, 11 years later, these same actors keep in touch with Ms. Wolfe and her family. She has since become the art teacher at Lame Deer middle and high schools, and has maintained a strong bond with Shakespeare in the Parks, bringing both its fall and spring educational outreach tours to Lame Deer schools.

Now when she travels, and finds herself in the hometown of one of these actors, she and her now-teenage son are invited to dinner at their homes. This is just one example of the strong relationships that are forged between the actors and community members because of Shakespeare in the Parks.

Creating Relevance

Albert Bair Theater, Billings: The Alberta Bair Theater is entering its second year of partnering with health and fitness organizations in Billings to promote physical fitness among area youth in a program called Project Hip-Hop. Activities include early morning

dance workouts with more than 300 fifth and sixth graders in the gymnasiums of five schools in Billings and Laurel, a residency at each of the schools on urban dance by an acclaimed dancer/teaching artist, and two school matinees for grades 4-12 at ABT.

Because Project Hip Hop is targeting Title I schools, ABT is helping to improve the education opportunities of low-income individuals. Studies have shown that regular physical activity among adolescents improves students’ academic performance, including academic achievement and grades, academic behavior such as time on task, and factors that influence academic achievement, such as concentration and attentiveness in the classroom.

Results from Project Hip-Hop’s first year showed an increase in daily attendance by those students participating in the early morning hip-hop sessions. The project also reached underserved elementary school students in Yellowstone County who have had little exposure to the concept of dance as exercise, and even less exposure to urban-themed music and dance, which contributes to the enhancement of cultural and artistic life of the community.

These elements, combined in a regular workout regime, set the stage for students to create, imagine and explore ways in which they can move their bodies, get in shape, and appreciate different types of dance and music.

Individual School Sponsorships also enrich the lives of area children. Due largely in part to ABT Board Member Leslie Pittman, more than 2,000 at-risk school students in Yellowstone County were able to attend an ABT school matinee at no cost during the 2012-13 school year. Ms. Pittman worked tirelessly to secure \$10,000 to fund the program. Her goal for 2013-14 is to ensure that every student in the county attends one or more ABT school matinee performances.



Stumptown Art Studio: Student Ben Holman with his Klimt creation.

(Photo by Kristie Caratelli)

Return on Investment – Impact on People’s Lives

Stumptown Art Studio, Whitefish: Stumptown Art Studio’s Art from the Heart program was developed with the goal of reaching out to the under-served members of our community. For several years we have worked with a gentleman named Ben Holman, now 33.

Here is a letter from Ben’s mother, Carla: “Ben had a rare seizure disorder as an infant that resulted in autism. He received special education throughout his school years; since leaving school, he has been able to work at a part-time job in the community.

“Participating in art classes at Stumptown

Art Studio for the past several years has enriched Ben’s life by providing structured activities that require planning and completion, giving him the mental exercise that goes with that. Ben’s communication is often limited to certain specific subjects that inter-

est him and that subject matter may or may not lend itself to conversations with others. His art experiences have given him a new venue for conversation that other people can often relate to.

“He enjoys showing his artwork and that has encouraged him to converse with friends and new acquaintances. (A couple of years ago, without his family’s knowledge, Ben packed several pieces of art in his suitcase for a weekend trip, to show family friends in Missoula.)

“Being part of art walks and shows through SAS has given Ben community integration because he’s a disabled person participating in an activity that a non-disabled person might participate in. Ben’s art has given him chances to try new things; it has provided something to anticipate and look forward to; he seems proud of his accomplishments with art; and it genuinely makes him happy.”

Each month we send an art instructor equipped with a variety of supplies to a fully accessible group home in nearby Kalispell. Eight adults with disabilities live in this home. This year we entered a variety of their artwork in the Flathead County Fair. Most earned blue ribbons, and all were viewed by thousands of residents.

At her most recent visit to the home, our art instructor was greeted with hugs and smiles by her students, who proudly wore their ribbons and were eager to begin their next art project. These are the stories that reflect the impact of the arts on people’s lives.



Alberta Bair Theater: Students arrive for a student matinee performance.



Montana Shakespeare in the Parks: Tour manager Steve Peebles opens up the show in Heron.

Arts Organizations: Understanding DUNS numbers

By Carleen Layne, MAC Accountant

First, an explanation: the Data Universal Number System, or DUNS, is a system the federal government has adopted to track how federal grant money is allocated. It’s a unique nine-character number that identifies your organization.

I just helped a Montana arts organization with a DUNS number question. It turns out they had three separate numbers. This can easily happen when you have staff turnover and/or multiple volunteers handling grant-writing duties.

It is each organization’s responsibility to check this information periodically and make sure the information that Dun and Bradstreet has for you is accurate.

If you have a DUNS number, in order to verify your information, go to www.dnb.com/get-a-duns-number.html. At the top

of the page there is an 800 number you can call and a chat-now button you can click to have a live chat with a D&B consultant. Or you can click on the middle link, “Have a DUNS number,” type in the name of your organization and get a listing of organizations with your name – hopefully there is only one. If there is, you can click on the check box in front of that name and review the information.

If not, a Resolve Duplicate Listing Option comes up and you can follow those directions and contact D&B by phone or through email. You may need to register for D&B’s iUpdate in order to access this capability.

If you don’t have a DUNS number, visit www.whitehouse.gov and search for “Obtaining a DUNS Number.”